



For Immediate Release

September 30, 2002

Brenda Sandberg, M-NCPPC (301) 650-4360
Patrick Lacefield, Montgomery County Council (240) 777-7939

Brenda.Sandberg@mncppc-mc.org
Patrick.Lacefield@co.mo.md.us

M-NCPPC and County Council Announce Acquisition of Red Door Store through Legacy Open Space Program

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's (M-NCPPC) Montgomery County Planning Board and the Montgomery County Council announced they have acquired the Red Door Store property, historically known as the Holland Store, as the Commission's first heritage resource protected under the Legacy Open Space program. This landmark property and associated acreage is located at the intersection of Layhill Road and Norwood Road just south of the Sandy Spring community in Montgomery County. It provides a sizeable and critical area of open space at the gateway to this historic community. This is the first acquisition of a site listed under the heritage resources protection category of the Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan.

M-NCPPC purchased the property from Robert E.L. Smith and Shirley A. Smith for just over \$1,500,000 using FY02 Legacy Open Space funds approved by the Montgomery County Council. The property contains a total of approximately 79 acres and will be added to the County's park system. The Commission will continue to lease the Red Door Store in its current commercial use. A management plan will be developed to decide on uses for the park appropriate to its historic character and setting in the Underground Railroad/Quaker Heritage Cluster. Potential activities could include reforestation of stream valley buffers, maintenance of forested and meadow wildlife habitat, and provision of nature and heritage trails connecting to Woodlawn, the Rural Legacy trail, and the Northwest Branch trail.

In addition to ensuring protection of both the structure and setting of the Red Door Store which was constructed about 1860, acquisition of the surrounding acreage preserves the environmental setting of two additional important historic resources: the Holland House, situated on a directly adjacent property also owned by the Smiths, and Woodlawn, which is located across Norwood Road from the acquired site and is now a County park. The Holland House is required to be maintained as an historic structure according to County preservation regulations, and the Commission has further obtained agreements for landscaping improvements to the commercial use located on the Holland House property, as well as the right of first refusal to purchase the property at any time in the future should the owner desire to sell it.

Montgomery County Planning Board Chairman Derick P. Berlage said “this important open space at the gateway to Sandy Spring is a great contribution to the heritage of the County. The Commission is glad to be able to preserve this open space and structure for future generations who may wish to learn about the history of this part of Montgomery County, including the Underground Railroad and Quaker heritage associated with Sandy Spring.”

“Everyone in this area knows this property and knows how significant this purchase is to preserving our open space and our history,” said Councilmember Nancy Dacek.

This acquisition is one of four Legacy Open Space properties being announced today. “These four acquisitions are real evidence of the strong commitment this County has made to preserving existing open spaces for our kids and our grandkids,” said Council President Steve Silverman. “That’s why the Council has stepped up to the plate to provide funding now for this vital purpose – before properties such as these are lost forever.”

Legacy Open Space is a bold, 10-year initiative proposed by the Planning Board and approved by the Montgomery County Council to conserve and steward land of exceptional value. The Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan identifies methods for protecting sensitive natural resources, water supply areas, heritage resources, greenways and trail connections, farmland and rural open space, and urban open space. Some resources may be purchased and added to the park system, while others may be protected through easement or public/private partnerships. A total of 1,290 acres of land has so far been protected throughout the County under the Legacy Open Space program since the program’s inception in 2000.

Support for the initial phase will come from County general obligation and park bonds. Additional future revenue is targeted to come from corporations, state and federal agencies, municipalities, and individual gifts to assure the land=s availability for future generations. The Commission has also partnered with the Montgomery Parks Foundation to coordinate private donations to the program.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission encourages the involvement and participation of all individuals in its facilities and programs. For assistance with special needs, such as sign language interpretation, large print materials, listening devices, etc., contact the Community Relations Office, 301-495-4600, TTY 301-495-1331 or the Maryland Relay Service, 1-800-735-2258.

###